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## **Sen. Brown calls on governor to hire additional gas pump inspectors as gas prices soar to \$3 a gallon**

**LANSING** – As gas prices in the state of Michigan climb to the \$3 mark, state Sen. Cameron S. Brown, R-Fawn River Township, has called on the governor to utilize the \$1.3 million appropriated by the Senate to hire additional gas station inspectors.

“We can’t wait any longer,” Brown said. “With gas nearing \$3 a gallon it is imperative that all protections which can be afforded to consumers are used. We are now 11 months into the fiscal year. The Legislature is clear as to the intent of the gas pump inspections appropriation. If the inspectors are not soon hired, I will call a special hearing of the Agriculture subcommittee that I chair in which departmental budget this special appropriations has been.”

Last year the Michigan Legislature allocated approximately \$1.3 million to hire additional gas station inspectors, but the administration put the use of that money on hold and refused to step up inspections.

Compliance inspections are conducted by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. According to a recent department announcement, gas station inspections will be “risk-based,” meaning they will target stations with a prior record of poor quality and complaints.

It is estimated that the current compliance rates cost Michigan consumers more than \$300 million a year.

Brown has called on the administration to hire the necessary inspectors since March.

The MDA’s “May Day to Labor Day” project, requested by the governor, found that 29 percent of gasoline sold in Michigan failed to meet quality standards and that 12 percent of gas stations fell short of gas quantity standards. The project included a sweep of 953 stations.

According to the MDA, Michigan gas-pump compliance rates are 71 percent for quality and 88 percent for quantity, compared to the national standard of approximately 95 percent.

The most common quality violations include selling lower octane gas as high octane gas, and having unacceptable amounts of water or sediment in gasoline. Typically, quantity violations occur when consumers are shorted the amount of gas they pay for. If just 10 percent of Michigan gas stations shorted two table spoons of gasoline from every gallon they sold each year, consumers would be overcharged \$24 million.

“With gas prices looming near \$3 a gallon we need to do something to protect consumers,” Brown said. “I find it extremely disturbing that nothing has been done yet to help protect Michigan motorists.”

If the Administration continues to fail to act, Brown will hold a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture meeting to call on Administration representatives for an explanation.

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